

Message

From: Moraff, Kenneth [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=B6170EF3BAEF40C3BDECAB56FD74B07A-MORAFF, KENNETH]
Sent: 12/3/2020 8:51:35 PM
To: R1_WD_Managers_SG [R1_WD_Managers_SG@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: Daily News Clips: Morning Edition, 12/3/20

From: Deegan, Dave <Deegan.Dave@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 03, 2020 11:56 AM
To: R1 Executives All <R1ExecutivesALL@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Daily News Clips: Morning Edition, 12/3/20

From: Kibilov, Nicholas
Sent: Thursday, December 3, 2020 11:56:04 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS
Subject: Daily News Clips: Morning Edition, 12/3/20

Daily News Clips: December 3, 2020 (morning edition)

Agency

FedWeek: IG Raises Concerns about EPA Return to Office Plans

Redlands Daily Facts: 50th anniversary of the EPA: How the Nixon Library is celebrating

Politico: U.N. head: 'The state of the planet is broken'

Water

eurweb: New Study: 40% of Tap Water Has Too Much Lead for Bottle-Fed Infants

IG Raises Concerns about EPA Return to Office Plans

<https://www.fedweek.com/federal-managers-daily-report/ig-raises-concerns-about-epa-return-to-office-plans/>

Published: December 3, 2020

More in: Federal Manager's Daily Report

An inspector general audit has raised concerns about the health and safety protections for employees under the policies of individual EPA offices for returning employees to their regular workplaces once conditions permit it.

Like many agencies, the EPA in the spring developed a nationwide policy based on local conditions and CDC guidance, the report recounted, with three phases up to one in which locations are to return to their normal status although with scheduling flexibilities and social distancing plans in place. Local offices then developed their own specific plans.

In a review of those plans for 13 EPA offices, the IG found what it called substantial differences. For example: 11 require face coverings to be worn in common areas while two only recommend it and only one addresses how the requirement will be enforced; only four provide for scheduling flexibilities such as staggered work shifts for social distancing purposes; there was wide variation in how the building ventilation systems are to be addressed; and while all plans reference CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting, only three specify how often high-touch areas are to be cleaned.

The report added that seven are in buildings with other entities but none of them specify how they will reduce contact with the general public in common areas such as elevators.

“While some differences in the reopening plans could be warranted based on local conditions, the EPA should ensure that such differences do not place employees at an increased risk of contracting or spreading the COVID-19 disease merely as a result of their work location,” it said.

In response, management said it would review the location-specific reopening plans for phase 3 to ensure that they comply with agency-wide guidance, “while recognizing that some flexibility is needed given the difference in ownership, use, and ages of agency buildings.”

50th anniversary of the EPA: How the Nixon Library is celebrating

<https://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/2020/12/03/50th-anniversary-of-the-epa-how-the-nixon-library-is-celebrating/>

By [KURT SNIBBE](#) | ksnibbe@seng.com | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: December 3, 2020 at 8:11 a.m. | UPDATED: December 3, 2020 at 8:48 a.m.

On Thursday, Dec. 3, the Richard Nixon Presidential Library & Museum is opening a permanent outdoor exhibition, “The President and the Planet: Richard Nixon and the Environment,” a look at the initiatives of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Admission is \$6 for access to all that’s in the rose garden. The outside venue is able to open under the state’s pandemic guidelines.

Where: Richard Nixon Presidential Library & Museum
18001 Yorba Linda Blvd., Yorba Linda, CA 92886
Outdoors in the Pat Nixon Gardens

Starting at 10:30 a.m. the exhibit dedication and virtual programs will be streamed live on [YouTube here](#).

To know why the Environmental Protection Agency was established, you have to know what the environment looked like in the U.S. in the 1960s.

Environmental regulations were mostly left up to the states until President Richard Nixon established the EPA in 1970.

Before that several environmental disasters had brought a lot of attention to environmentalism. In 1969, the polluted Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire. There was a large oil spill along the Santa Barbara coastline and concerns about poor air quality and toxicological side effects from harmful pesticides lead to more pressure on the government to regulate polluters.

Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, leading the way to the July 1970 establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency. The 1969 Act presented to the House and Senate had a groundbreaking 37-point message on the environment, including:

Requesting \$4 billion for the improvement of water treatment facilities.

Asking for national air quality standards and stringent guidelines to lower motor vehicle emissions.

Launching federally funded research to reduce automobile pollution.

Ordering a cleanup of federal facilities that had fouled air and water.
Seeking legislation to end the dumping of waste into the Great Lakes.
Proposing a tax on lead additives in gasoline.
Contingency plans for the treatment of oil spills.

After conducting hearings during that summer, the House and Senate approved the proposal. The agency's first administrator, William Ruckelshaus, took the oath of office on Dec. 4, 1970, which is what the agency considers its birthday.

Nixon said in his 1970 State of the Union speech, "Restoring nature to its natural state is a cause beyond party and beyond factions."

U.N. head: 'The state of the planet is broken'

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2020/12/03/un-head-the-state-of-the-planet-is-broken-792005>

By KELSEY TAMBORRINO

12/03/2020 10:00 AM EST

DRIVING THE DAY

ENERGY INEFFICIENT: Countries are expected to post slow progress on energy efficiency across the globe this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, according to the International Energy Agency's latest energy efficiency report released this morning. "As a result of the crisis and continuing low energy prices, energy intensity is expected to improve by only 0.8% in 2020, roughly half the rates, corrected for weather, for 2019 (1.6%) and 2018 (1.5%)," the report said — well below the level needed to achieve global climate and sustainability goals.

"Together with renewables, energy efficiency is one of the mainstays of global efforts to reach energy and climate goals. While our recent analysis shows encouraging momentum for renewables, I'm very concerned that improvements in global energy efficiency are now at their slowest rate in a decade," said Fatih Birol, the executive director of the IEA, in a statement.

Investments in new energy-efficient buildings, equipment and vehicles are also expected to decline this year, mostly because of declines in economic growth and income uncertainty among consumers and businesses. Sales of new cars are expected to drop more than 10 percent from 2019, in turn keeping the overall vehicle fleet older and less efficient, the report said, although the share of electric vehicles in new car sales is expected to grow to 3.2 percent, up from 2.5 percent last year.

'THE STATE OF THE PLANET IS BROKEN': U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called on world leaders to use the next year, and coronavirus recovery efforts, to address "our planetary emergency" and move toward carbon neutrality.

"To put it simply, the state of the planet is broken," Guterres said during a speech at Columbia University on Wednesday. "Dear friends, humanity is waging war on nature. This is suicidal. Nature always strikes back, and it is already doing so with growing force and fury." Guterres pointed to a collapse in biodiversity, mounting plastic waste, the acidification of the oceans and bleaching of coral reefs, as well as deaths around the globe from air and water pollution.

In order to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the world needs to in part decrease fossil fuel production by at least 6 percent early next year through 2030, he said. "Instead, we're going in the opposite direction," Guterres added.

— Guterres' remarks coincided with a [World Meteorological Organization report](#) Wednesday that said average global temperatures this year are set to be 1.2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This year is on track to be one of the three warmest, the report found, and this decade will be the warmest on record. "There is at least a one-in-five chance of it temporarily exceeding 1.5 [degrees Celsius] by 2024," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas in a statement.

ON THE HILL

MEET THE RANKING MEMBERS: House Republicans backed McMorris Rodgers and Westerman to lead the party on the House Energy and Commerce and Natural Resources committees, respectively, [Pro's Anthony Adragna reports](#). McMorris Rodgers beat Reps. [Michael Burgess](#) of Texas and [Bob Latta](#) of Ohio to win the position, a spokesperson for Minority Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#) confirmed, making her the first woman to hold a leadership role at the E&C panel.

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) speaks during a House Energy and Commerce Environment and Climate Change Subcommittee hearing on April 2, 2019. | Photo by Zach Gibson/Getty Images

McMorris Rodgers has championed hydropower, which accounts for more than two-thirds of all electricity generation in her home state, and called for free-market innovation to address climate change.

Westerman prevailed over Rep. [Paul Gosar](#) of Arizona, according to the spokesperson. A Yale-educated forester, he worked closely with Republican leaders as they unveiled a moderate package of bills to combat climate change last year. Westerman crafted a bill backing the push to plant 1 trillion trees by 2050.

What's next? The selections now must be ratified by the entire Republican conference later this week, a move that is typically a formality.

HFC DEAL IN AN OMNI? Lobbyists are pushing to get a compromise on phasing out hydrofluorocarbons into any end-of-the-year omnibus government funding deal that passes Congress. A disagreement between Sens. [John Barrasso](#) (R-Wyo.) and [John Neely Kennedy](#) (R-La.) over the climate-change inducing chemicals torpedoed an energy policy bill last year, but the two sides struck a deal earlier in 2020. Now, lobbyists hope they can attach the phase-down language onto the must-pass legislation.

"We're working very hard on this and we're not resting till the fat lady sings," said Francis Dietz, a spokesperson for the Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute, a trade association of coolant makers. "If there is an omnibus, we're doing everything we can to make sure we're in it."

KELLY JOINS SENATE: Democrat [Mark Kelly](#) of Arizona was sworn in Wednesday as the newest member of the Senate, narrowing the GOP majority to 52-48. Kelly beat GOP Sen. [Martha McSally](#), a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, in a special election last month.

TRANSITION 2020

LUJAN GRISHAM TURNS DOWN INTERIOR: New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, a co-chair of President-elect Joe Biden's transition team, turned down an offer in recent days to run the Interior Department, [three sources close to the transition told POLITICO](#). Lujan Grisham had been seen as a leading candidate for Biden's health secretary — a role she would prefer — although Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo is now a top

contender for that role. "You can't blame her for being honest about where her real passion lies," one person close to Lujan Grisham said.

U.S. COMPANIES URGE BIDEN, CONGRESS ON CLIMATE: More than 40 major U.S. companies, organized by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, called on the incoming Biden administration and lawmakers on the Hill to tackle climate change through "ambitious, durable, bipartisan" policies. "To achieve a net-zero economy, the United States must establish durable national policies that harness market forces, mobilize investment and innovation, and provide the certainty needed to plan for the long term," said a joint statement from the companies.

"It is also vital that our climate policies meet the needs of marginalized communities, low-income households, and workers and communities disadvantaged by the energy transition," it added. The companies include heavyweights from the technology, auto, chemicals, oil and gas, and banking industries, including Amazon, Bank of America, BP, Dow, Ford, Google, JP Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley and Shell. Collectively, the companies employ nearly 5 million people and generate \$3 trillion in annual revenues, according to C2ES.

AROUND THE AGENCIES

SEC SETS \$25M PENALTY OVER SCANA PROJECT: The utility company that abandoned plans to build two new nuclear power reactors in South Carolina will pay a \$25 million penalty to the Securities and Exchange Commission under the terms of a deal reached on Wednesday, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. The former SCANA utility, now owned by Dominion Energy, will pay a \$25 million fine for violating antifraud provisions in securities laws, as well as certain reporting requirements. The deal also requires the company to disgorge \$112.5 million to ratepayers and shareholders — though that has already been satisfied by two settlements totaling over \$300 million that were previously reached with those groups in other litigation.

CHRISTIE TO JOIN FERC IN JANUARY: Mark Christie, who was confirmed as a FERC member on Monday, will be sworn in on Jan. 4 at the Virginia State Corporation Commission, which he currently chairs. That means he'll miss FERC's December open meeting. "There is a number of matters for the Judge to wrap up here at the SCC. So, he will continue through the end of the calendar year," VSCC spokesperson Ken Schrad told ME. Christie does not yet have his signed commission, either, so the swearing in is contingent on that, but the document can take as long as a week to make its way from the White House.

WHEELER IN QUARANTINE AFTER COVID-19 EXPOSURE: EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler is quarantining after exposure to a person diagnosed with Covid-19, Alex also reports. Wheeler had contact earlier this week with a masked person who has since tested positive, an agency spokesman said. That person has been asymptomatic. "After consulting my doctor and out of an abundance of caution, I will quarantine until I've gone through the proper testing protocols," Wheeler said in a statement. He added that he "look[s] forward to carrying out agency business as usual."

EPA OVERTURNS YAZOO PROJECT VETO: In a surprise move, EPA has effectively overturned a 2008 veto of the Yazoo Backwater Area Pumps project, a controversial flood control plan along the Mississippi River, the agency confirmed to Pro's Ben Lefebvre. The agency said plans for the \$220 million project had changed enough from the original proposal that the George W. Bush administration's decision to reject it under the Clean Water Act no longer applied.

"EPA has determined that the proposed project is not subject to EPA's 2008 Final Determination," Regional Administrator Mary Walker wrote in a Nov. 30 letter to the Army Corps of Engineers. The Bush administration nixed the plan for pumps that would divert rainwater from an already soggy part of the state into the river over concerns that it would damage as much as 67,000 acres of wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Opponents of the project said the changes that the Corps is pursuing now — which include moving the project eight miles from the original proposed site and using natural gas instead of diesel to power the facility — are superficial at best and could actually threaten more environmental damage than the initial plan would have. "It's a very, very dangerous precedent to set," said Olivia Dorothy, director of Upper Mississippi River Basin operations for American Rivers. "These vetoes are supposed to be set."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EPA: Biden marked the agency's 50th birthday on Wednesday with a rebuke of the Trump administration, promising an EPA "guided by science" and pledging to reassert its "place as the world's premier environmental protection agency that safeguards our planet, protects our lives, and strengthens our economy." He added in a statement: "We will strengthen our clean air and water protections, hold polluters accountable for their actions, and deliver environmental justice in low-income communities and communities of color across America and tribal lands."

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

— Waxman Strategies, the public affairs firm led by former Rep. Henry Waxman, added Michael Goo as a principal within the environmental practice, Johan Bergen as vice president in the technology practice and Carl Leighty as incoming environment practice director. Leighty and Goo join from lobbying firm AJW. Goo was also previously Democratic chief counsel for energy and environment at the E&C Committee and an EPA associate administrator for policy. Bergen previously was senior director for public policy at Vulcan.

— Dan Nesvet has been appointed a presidential management fellow at the Energy Department, where he will be a congressional liaison to the Appropriations committees. He previously was a senior associate at Cornerstone Government Affairs. ([H/t Playbook](#))

— McKenzie Wilson is starting as the communications director for the progressive think tank Data for Progress. She previously was with Rep. [Abby Finkenauer's](#) congressional campaign and Sen. [Elizabeth Warren's](#) presidential campaign, as well as had roles with [Jamaal Bowman's](#) congressional campaign and Washington Sen. [Patty Murray's](#) office.

THE GRID

- "[Last-minute snags complicate massive spending deal](#)," via POLITICO.
- "[Biden's environmental lawyers tasked with bulletproofing agenda](#)," via Bloomberg Law.
- "[EPA joins conservative social network Parler](#)," via The Hill.
- "[Pemex is no longer active in oil industry's key climate group](#)," via Bloomberg.

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

New Study: 40% of Tap Water Has Too Much Lead for Bottle-Fed Infants

<https://eurweb.com/2020/12/03/new-study-40-of-tap-water-has-too-much-lead-for-bottle-fed-infants/>
December 3, 2020

By [Fisher Jack](#)

*WASHINGTON DC — [A new study by Healthy Babies Bright Futures \(HBBF\)](#), in partnership with Virginia Tech, tested tap water from 343 cities in 46 states and found that 79% of homes had detectable levels of lead in water. Moreover, 40% of homes had lead levels above the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommended limit for children (1 ppb).

Lead in water has been in the news for years, but Healthy Babies Bright Futures' newest report is the first study to focus on the highest risk population – bottle-fed infants drinking formula made with tap water.

Baby formula made with tap water is far more likely than breastmilk to contain significant lead levels, and 16 percent of U.S. babies are exclusively formula-fed. Seventy-five percent of infants consume at least some formula.

This important new study reveals that there is far more lead in tap water than is safe for babies. In fact, no levels of lead are considered safe.

79% of homes tested have detectable levels of lead in tap water.

40% of homes have lead levels above the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommended limit for children (1 ppb).

21% of homes have lead levels above the level that causes up to 1% loss in lifetime economic productivity for an exposed infant/child, due to IQ loss.

Bottle-fed infants drink up to 10 times more water than adults relative to their body weight and get 10 times the lead dose as a result.

26% of black infants are exclusively formula-fed, leaving black babies at higher risk.

Water lead levels between 5 and 15 ppb cause IQ loss in the range of 1 to 2 points for a bottle-fed infant. One of every 8 homes we tested had water lead levels above 5 ppb.

Up to 10 million homes nationwide get water through lead pipes that can release harmful amounts of the toxic heavy metal. Lead-bearing solder and fixtures add additional traces. Formula-fed infants face the greatest risks, with higher exposures to lead in drinking water, pound for pound, than any other family member, at a time in life when the brain is most vulnerable to lead-induced harm such as lowered IQ or learning and behavioral problems.

Despite these obvious risks, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is relaxing regulations by extending the prior 14-year timeline to a new 33-year grace period for utilities to replace lead pipes with safer materials. The rollback creates the prospect of yet another generation of children harmed by lead in water.

The concentrated risk for formula-fed infants underscores the crucial need for action from EPA, cities and water utilities, and parents to reduce lead levels in tap water. HBBF's new research highlights the problem of lead in water, but also shares what parents, water utilities, and the EPA should do to get toxic lead out of drinking water and infant's first food.

[Read the full report here](#) and view the [summary of the findings here](#).

ABOUT HEALTHY BABIES BRIGHT FUTURES: Healthy Babies Bright Futures (HBBF) is an alliance of scientists, nonprofit organizations and donors working to create and support initiatives that measurably reduce exposures to neurotoxic chemicals in the first one thousand days of development. Our efforts are inspired and supported by science and data, and designed to help restore the chance for a full life to children who would otherwise face brain-diminishing exposures to toxic chemicals beginning in utero. www.hbbf.org

source:

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